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Message Text

SECRET

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11
ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 LAB-01 PRS-01 EB-03 PM-03

DODE-00 L-02 RSR-01 /061 W
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R 280602 Z APR 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0902

S E C R E T SAIGON 7413

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB VS
SUBJECT: RAILROAD UNION CADRES JAILED

1. WORKERS DEMONSTRATE FOR BACK PAY AND ARE JAILED: LESS THAN A WEEK BEFORE MAY DAY (LABOR DAY) 20 OUT OF AN ORIGINAL 26 RAILROAD UNION CADRE ARE STILL IN JAIL FOR HAVING LED A PEACEFUL TWO-HOUR SITDOWN DEMONSTRATION ON TUESDAY, APRIL 17, TO PROTEST THE GVN' S FAILURE TO PAY 160 MILLION PIASTERS IN BACKPAY TO 4000 RAILROAD WORKERS. THE THREE TOP LEADERS OF THE RAILROAD UNION, TRAN TRONG DAT, NGUYEN VAN CUOT AND HOANG XUAN DONG, ARE IN HIDING FROM THE POLICE. THE MINISTER OF LABOR, THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS & PTT, AND THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE RAILROAD, ALL AGREE THAT THE WORKERS ARE ENTITLED TO THE BACK PAY THEY DEMAND. THE BACK PAY CLAIM RESULTS FROM A RAISE IN MINIMUM WAGES GRANTED IN 1970 TO GOVERNMENT WORKERS, BUT NOT APPLIED TO THE RAILROAD WORKERS.

2. RAILROAD WORKERS SECRETARY HOANG XUAN DONG CONTACTED THE LABATT, PRIOR TO THE SITDOWN STRIKE, ASKING HIS INTERVENTION, CLAIMING

THE SITUATION WAS SO SERIOUS THAT " AN IMMOLATION COULD BE EXPECTED SO AS TO START A POLITICAL DISPUTE". THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE
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RAILROAD, MR. NGUYEN VAN CHIEU, ALSO CALLED ON THE LABATT

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AFTER THE WORKERS WERE ARRESTED REQUESTING HIS INTERVENTION.
LABATT
EXPRESSED SYMPATHY IN BOTH CASES BUT DECLINED THE OFFER TO
INTERVENE.

3. FRIENDS OF RAILROAD UNION OFFICIALS ARRESTED. AT MI OECD MEETING IN
QUESTION HAD BEEN AIMED AT NOT
HAVING A CONFRONTATION WITH CANADA BUT RATHER TO ATTEMPT
TO GAIN ITS GOOD WILL BECAUSE OF OTHER NON- FOOTWEAR- RELATED
GOS OBJECTIVES. THESE OTHER OBJECTIVES INCLUDED OBTAINING
CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR THE CANDIDACY OF MANUEL AZPILICUETA,
TECHNICAL SECRETARY GENERAL, MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, FOR
THE VICE- CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE OECD INDUSTRY COMMITTEE.
ANOTHER CONSIDERATION WAS THAT THE GOS MINISTER OF INDUSTRY
LOPEZ DE LETONA, WHO HAS JUST RETURNED FROM CANADA WHERE HE
HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN NEGOTIATING A JOINT VENTURE WITH
ALCAN FOR AN ALUMINUM PLANT IN SPAIN, DID NOT WISH TO
CREATE ANY CONTRETEMPS WITH CANADA AT THIS JUNCTURE.

3. IT STRIKES THE EMBASSY THAT A LOGICAL SOURCE FOR THE
DATA ON UNIT COST OF PRODUCTION FOR FOOTWEAR BEING SOUGHT
FOR THE TARIFF COMMISSION INVESTIGATION PER REFTEL C MIGHT
MORE EFFECTIVELY AND ACCURATELY BE OBTAINED THROUGH THE
MEDIUM OF THE OECD INDUSTRY COMMITTEE PROPOSED STUDY THAN
ON A BILATERAL BASIS. THE SUGGESTION THEREFORE IS THAT
THE DEPARTMENT CONSIDER SUCH A COURSE OF ACTION
AS A FALL BACK SOURCE IN THE EVENT THAT OUR EFFORT TO
OBTAIN COST INFORMATION THROUGH EMBASSY REQUESTS TO
PRODUCING COMPANIES FAILS, WHICH APPEARS PROBABLE.
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** LIMDIS
*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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